THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Department of Posts has the largest Postal Network in the world with 1,55,516 post offices of which 89% are in the rural areas. Apart from distribution of mail, Department of Posts is leveraging its network to offer services like acceptance of payment of utility bills, sale of application forms relating to various examinations, acceptance of loan applications on behalf of financial institutions, acceptance of Income Tax and Service Tax returns, etc. for convenience of the public.

(b) and (c) Such additional services are taken up by the Department of Posts with the objective of optimal utilization of existing manpower and infrastructure, which is adequate for the purpose and generation of additional revenue for the Government.

Expansion of telephone network in rural areas

†2583. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that at present 81 clusters have been set up for expansion of telephone network in rural areas in the country;

(b) if not, the number thereof;

(c) the average number of villages in whose areas these clusters exist and the number of such villages alongwith the States in which the same lie; and

(d) by when the telephone facility is proposed to be set up in all such areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) A scheme has been launched by the Government to provide support for setting up and managing 7871 number of infrastructure sites spread

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

over 500 districts across 81 clusters in the country for provision of mobile services including other Wireless Access Services like Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) using Fixed/Mobile terminals in the specified rural and remote areas, where there is no existing fixed wireless or mobile coverage. The details of the towers to be set up in specified rural and remote areas are given in the Statement (*See* below).

(d) The telephone facility is proposed to be set up in all such areas by June, 2008.

Statement

Details of the average No. of villages where Towers for provision of mobile services to be set up

Sl. No.	State	No. of Districts	No. of Clusters	No. of Towers	No. of villages getting covered by the Towers
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Andhra Pradesh	22	6	581	9081
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	12	1	62	936
3.	Assam	20	1	90	3118
4.	Bihar	37	5	489	23586
5.	Chhattisgarh	16	5	560	10929
6.	Gujarat	4	1	66	822
7.	Haryana	8	1	14	273
8.	Himachal Pradesh	11	3	295	5653
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	12	2	178	2150
10.	Jharkhand	18	3	305	12529
11.	Karnataka	26	4	427	9309
12.	Kerala	11	1	46	140
13.	Madhya Pradesh	45	10	985	24505
14.	Maharashtra	33	9	1017	18520

1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	Manipur	9	1	95	695
16.	Meghalaya	7	1	102	2803
17.	Mizoram	8	1	71	361
18.	Nagaland	7	1	56	474
19.	Orissa	30	4	432	15930
20.	Punjab	3	1	13	501
21.	Rajasthan	32	4	411	10839
22.	Sikkim	3	1	8	87
23.	Tamil Nadu	27	4	371	6430
24.	Tripura	4	1	147	655
25.	Uttar Pradesh	66	6	666	34767
26.	Uttaranchal	13	2	217	8086
27.	West Bengal	16	2	167	9125
	TOTAL:	500	81	7871	212304

Schemes to discourage surrendering of fixed lines

2584. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than seventy lakh fixed lines of BSNL have been surrendered by subscribers in various circles during the last two years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action taken to ensure attractive schemes to discourage surrender ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Major reasons for disconnection of landline telephone connections are: